

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Korea

SUBJECT General Conditions in the Wonsan Area

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1. After the United Nations forces retreated from the Wonsan area in December 1950, the North Korean government and party officials returned to resume their duties. For the first two months the officials employed mild means of checking alleged collaborators, but they grew more brutal and impatient as time passed. Non-Party members, Christians, and families of those who had fled south with the United Nations troops were searched and accused. Police in the area employed special pressure methods against these families: their gates were marked with red placards declaring their status and prohibiting them from associating with other residents. A similar placard was provided which they were forced to wear on their chests when outside their homes on permitted errands. They were thus under constant surveillance. In the spring of 1951, security forces in the Wonsan area mobilized police, party members, and civilian security organization members in an intensive search of the mountains, as a result of which a large number of young men were captured and executed. There appeared, however, to be a shortage of skilled personnel in North Korean security agencies in mid-1951 in the Wonsan area.
2. In June money was scarce in the Wonsan area and the populace was suffering from a tax burden approximately three times as heavy as that in peacetime. To avoid being suspected as reactionary, the citizens were also forced to make frequent donations toward the purchase of planes, tanks, and other war material for the North Korean government. Rice was scarce; when it could be found, the price was 3,000 North Korean won per small mal.¹
3. Electricity was being provided in the larger towns in the Wonsan area for use by the North Korean government agencies by the Changjin Power Plant (127-15, 40-23) (CV 5171).

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1. Comment. A small mal equals about one-quarter of a bushel in volume, and when applied to rice is about fifteen pounds.

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